

PROJEKTRAUM LONDON

March 2021

PROJEKTRAUM LONDON is pleased to announce its inaugural exhibition 'Florilegium' with new works by the Frankfurt am Main, Germany, based artist Sara Rossi in her first show in the UK, with an essay by Marie Oucherif. Marie Oucherif is a Frankfurt am Main based writer and curator, and currently Curatorial Assistant at Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt.

'The Latin term Florilegium is the seed for the English "anthology" or the more poetic German "Blütenlese" – literally, a harvest of petals. Medieval anthologies consisted of a fine selection of plants, and even cherry-picked writings or passages and excerpts (many of which had been textually altered) that were arranged alphabetically or systematically in one volume. Sara Rossi's exhibition at Projektraum London uses paintings themselves as the entries of a Florilegium, introducing the reader to a creative process in which the perception of the act of painting becomes a writing practise, comparable to the slow growth and development of plants. Such a painting, originating from the act of seeing, is not simply an abstract painting. It represents – as Florilegia do – a seed from which plants will grow: paintings in which Rossi's internal response surfaces through the work's meditative nature. These responses are not only generated by emotional interiority, but are rather practices and awareness sheathed in hints through their visual language. They exist in permanent tension with a distant hand operating slowly, meticulously transferring a close memory, intimacy.

Rossi's usage of colour and forms is analogous to how handwriting visualises words on paper, and opens up to a way of immediacy that gets more complex by the addition of time and process. One can shift the expectations and the prevailing understanding that a beholder generally has of what a painting can or should be. Analysing the genesis of her visual outcome, Rossi describes herself as extremely close to the fundamental elements of archaic abstraction: a style of painting in which colour is effortlessly applied, launched through the natural muscle memory of the body on canvas, rather than executed carefully through the development from a detail. The resulting work emphasises the almost poetic layers of a situation.

Her artistic practice is strongly influenced by ideas of interpretation and subjectivity. Rossi elects to use Untitled in place of a title for her paintings – a deliberate attempt to counteract the impetus of offering a lens for reading the works. Following Susan Sonntag's essay "Against Interpretation," which argues against the dominance of verbal hermeneutics in discussions of art, Rossi's work operates as the residue of thoughts-and-memories, akin to a photograph of a mental process or a meditation that has been transferred through the hand onto canvas. Her modus operandi eschews sketches based on figurative elements of the external world, which could be interpreted as unresolved forms of abstraction; instead, Rossi sees her approach as a sort of "mental metabolism," in which psychological forms are made manifest on the canvas. Less interested in the illusionistic representation of reality, and more in the way paintings and image are able to convey a system of thinking, Rossi's paintings draw an allusion to writing, in visualising words on paper through the hand. The anthology she thus creates is reminiscent of this medieval world referencing florilegium by enclosing the bi-dimensional and anti-perspectival character of the works. The elements obtained act as a support for a second phase of creating signs on several levels. All at once the allegory becomes a ritual, a visual potion in its intertwining of layers.'

Marie Oucherif, December 2020

Sara Rossi is an Italian painter living and working in Frankfurt am Main, where she attends the painting class of Monika Baer at Städelschule. She graduated from Università degli Studi di Trieste in Italy with a Master's degree in anthropology and speech philosophy, focussing on ways to convey cultural and female identities in writing, before joining the class of Trisha Donnelly at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in 2015. Recent shows include: Polyphony (with Axelle Camille and Su Xia) at Las Palmas Project, Lisbon, Solo Show at Regatta 2, Düsseldorf, Silbertopf (group show) at Projektraum Georg-Schwarz-Straße, Leipzig, and Cosy (with Lisa Baer and Rebecca Grundmann) at Im Goldenen, Düsseldorf.

PROJEKTRAUM LONDON

PROJEKTRAUM LONDON is an intimate exhibition space situated on the lower level of Claas Reiss, yet fully independent of the gallery's program. PROJEKTRAUM LONDON gives artists and curators at an early stage the opportunity to curate and showcase work in an informal setting, without commitment, while benefitting from the infrastructure of a commercial gallery in an accessible central London location.

Claas Reiss and PROJEKTRAUM LONDON are based in central London, north of Fitzrovia across Euston Road and close to Slade School of Art, occupying the ground floor and lower level of a retail unit in the Regent's Park Estate, an area of high rise social housing council blocks - yet in a central location with 6 tube lines in 5-10 minutes walking distance, close to Paddington and King's Cross St Pancras with connections to London airports and Eurostar terminal, and a 4min walk from Regent's Park through Chester Gate.

For further information please visit www.claasreiss.com/projektraum-london, email info@claasreiss.com or call +44 7769 566 922. Please follow @projektraumlondon and @claasreiss on Instagram. Opening hours are Wed - Sat 11:00am - 6:00pm and by appointment.